

Sonata for Organ – For the Creation of the World

The organ has a long and regal history, stretching back before the Christian Era. Like its miniscule cousin, the pan pipe, the organ is a piped wind instrument, but with keyboards played by hands and feet, and with the wind produced by various electro-mechanical means, rather than by human breath. The modern pipe organ (i.e., from the 19th century) is a marvel of engineering, easily the most complex instrument on the planet, and the only instrument, aside from the synthesizer, possessing the sonic resources of a symphony orchestra.

Igor Stravinsky famously told Robert Craft, “I dislike the organ's legato sostenuto and its blur of octaves, as well as the fact that the monster never breathes.” These very qualities that Stravinsky decried, in fact, proved irresistible to a host of composers from the Renaissance through today. The organ's sustained-breath legato sostenuto makes it an ideal medium for hearing the full effect of contrapuntal music. Listen to Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* played on the organ, with each note sounding through to its full value, and it is as if one is hearing the counterpoint for the first time. The “blur of octaves” is signal to the organ's capacity to amass a wall of sound at levels that rival that of a symphony orchestra.

With the *Sonata for Organ – For the Creation of the World* (hereafter referred to as “the Sonata” or “the Organ Sonata”), Andrew Violette joins the ranks of great organ composers such as Sweelinck, Bach, Franck, Dupré, and Messiaen. The Sonata is an epic work, epic in scope (3 hours and 11 minutes), epic in its demands upon the performer, and epic from a formalistic standpoint. It is also epically beautiful, due in no small part to its voice leading. Its voice leading is masterful; a glance at the score will reveal a veteran composer at the height of his game. Its counterpoint is complex but transparent, sinuous, and sensuous. Its chordal writing ranges from euphonious to piercingly dissonant. The astute listener will hear that the Organ Sonata draws primary inspiration from Messiaen and from Bruckner, though Mr. Violette's compositional voice and unique gestural style are never overshadowed.

The performance of the Sonata heard here is registered for the Opus 700 pipe organ, which was constructed by J.W. Steere & Son in 1918, and which is installed at the New Baptist Temple, in Brooklyn, New York. The organ has 2,553 pipes and four manuals. More on this instrument later.

The notes that follow constitute primarily a listener's guide to the Sonata, patterns and thoughts that emerged as this writer listened to the piece, score in hand. The notes are designed to orient the first-time listener to the Sonata's thematic material and form, and to point out certain unifying features that otherwise might be overlooked on first hearing. An equally detailed set of notes could be written focusing on the Sonata's use of biblical text and biblical numerology and their relation to the generative materials that inform the composition. It is hoped, too, that these notes can serve as a jumping off point for deeper analyses of this remarkable work.

How is one to approach a work for a single instrument lasting more than three hours? One is put to mind of what Morton Feldman said: “Up to one hour you think about form, but after an hour and a half it's scale.” For this listener, though, neither form nor scale seems the most appropriate word. This listener experiences the Sonata more as an ecosystem, an environment in which musical lines and themes appear, move about, commingle, disappear, and then, transformed, reappear. There is a perception of an unfolding of a natural process, a continuous variation akin to observing the changing yet self-similar patterns in the flora and fauna of a shoreland over several days and nights.

The Sonata is in five movements:

Movement I – “In The Beginning...”

(Lento Giusto, ♩= 40)

Movement II – “Light” (3 arias)

(Largo, ♩=50; Largo, ♩=48; L'istesso Tempo ♩=40)

Movement III – “The Days” (5 sections)

(Adagio Cantabile, ♩=54; Allegro, ♩=100; Con Brio, ♩=92; Andante con mosso, ♩=58; Andante, ♩=60 ca.)

Movement IV – “Dance of Joy” (Vivace, ♩=63 and ♩=189)

Movement V – “Thanksgiving” (Molto Sostenuto Sempre, ♩=40)

Movements I, II and III are together close to equal in length to Movement V; thus, the Organ Sonata as a whole has a tri-partite structure, with the first three movements and the fifth movement as two enormous stelai, and a Dance of Joy in between. While much of the Sonata’s music is slow, fast tempo music in movements III and IV punctuate events and create balance within the overall form.

Movement I – “In The Beginning...”

The movement begins *ex nihilo* with a gently swelling C major chord. There are no bar lines, key signatures or time signatures, only naked chords. Three times, the movement alternates sequences of chords with a Refrain (in 2/4 time); thus, the movement has a tripartite A-B form: A-B-A`-B`-A``-B``. The sixteenth-note gets the beat, in a very slow tempo (40 beats per minute). The movement totals 1,944 beats, of which 1,792 are given over to the chords, and 152 are given to the Refrain. The organist is required to draw the organ stops by hand while simultaneously playing chords with the same hand, a rather unusual technique.

Each of the three chordal sequences has at least one sub-sequence; sub-sequences are separated by silences lasting either an eighth note or a quarter note. The movement utilizes the Fibonacci numbers to determine how many chords will be played in each sequence. The following table shows, for each of the three chordal sequences, the number of chords in each sub-sequence, and, where not obvious, the Fibonacci numbers that comprise the number of chords in the sub-sequence or the number of sub-sequences in each sequence.

Chord Sequence #	Sub-Sequence #	Sub-Sequence (number of chords)	Constituent Fibonacci Numbers
1	1	5	
	2	8	
	3	8	
	4	3	
	5	34	
2	1	50	3,5,8,13,21
3	1	5	
	2	5	
	3	8	

Chord Sequence #	Sub-Sequence #	Sub-Sequence (number of chords)	Constituent Fibonacci Numbers
	4	13	
	5	5	
	6	5	
	7	5	
	8	3	
	9	13	
	10	8	
	11	19	1,2,3,5,8
	12	8	
	13	8	
	14	2	
	15	8	
	16	9	3,5,8 and 8,1

As the movement progresses, it differentiates, and the following occurs in the chordal sequences:

- The rhythmic value of the chords shortens.
- Minor chords are introduced – In the beginning, the chords start out as all major. About halfway through the movement, minor chords appear (sin? Satan?).
- The chords themselves become more complex and more chromatic; that is, they partake increasingly of their upper partial tones.

Taken together, these three processes cause the movement to grow in intensity as it progresses. The Refrain, however, remains essentially unchanged (God's constancy?), though this writer perceives the Refrain, too, to grow in intensity each time it is stated. This is due not only to the Refrain's repetition but also is a result of the increasingly concentrated chordal context within which the Refrain is placed.

Another aspect of this movement (and the work as a whole) is worth discussing here; that is, how twelve-tone technique cohabits with a tonal vocabulary. In his book, *Simple Composition* (1979), Charles Wuorinen writes:

“If the principle of ordered interval succession becomes a sufficiently generalized generator of form, then...the principles of pitch organization derived from interval content...can be reintroduced into what is basically order-determined music. This appears to be the direction of highly chromatic music of the present day, and perhaps in the future we shall hear a reconciliation of the two principles of pitch organization, content and order – or rather their unification in a superior whole. This...will serve to demonstrate...that the tonal and 12-tone systems are not really separate musical entities.”

In the Organ Sonata, Andrew Violette shows how viably the serial and tonal sound worlds can not only coexist but can be merged to create an amalgam of equal or greater beauty than each separately. Mr. Violette has the

intellect, the skill and the force of personality to be able to put the widest possible spectrum of compositional techniques at the service of the piece at hand, and still create a cohesive whole.

Let's look at the first twelve chords of the first movement.

If one extracts the root of each of these twelve chords, one obtains:

This is a twelve tone row in which all possible intervals are to be found; its interval class vector is $\langle 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 6 \rangle$ which is to say that offers fully saturated chromatic possibilities. The ear doesn't hear the opening passage as anything but tonally-related (the passage is not functionally tonal) because the row is embedded in a triadic framework. Why adopt such a technique? One reason is that the technique opens up the full range of possibilities from the most consonant to the most dissonant, including all the sounds of the tonal system. Nothing is left out, including using serial techniques with tonal sounding material. As beautiful as pure serial music can be, in the wrong hands it can tend to sound like a parade of seconds and sevenths. It would be difficult, at least for this listener, to listen repeatedly to a three-plus hour long twelve-tone serial piece (*pace*, Berg, *Lulu*)

If one analyzes the chordal sections of this movement, one finds that the chords continue to form twelve-tone rows, though with additional pitches interposed, and spanning sub-sections. There are at least eight such rows in the movement.

Let's turn our attention to the Refrain. The Refrain appears three times, and it is composed of three similar two-measure phrases. The Refrain's second appearance is a semitone above the first appearance. The third statement, in addition to being another semitone up, is a variant with a concluding cadence.

It is of interest to note that the last chord of this third Refrain and the last chord of the third chordal section are both G major, which is the chord that concludes the Sonata. Also of interest and unique to the third Refrain: there is a quarter note rest preceding the last three quarter-note beats. This rest not only brings finality to the movement, it also references in the listener's memory the rests between the chordal sections throughout the movement. Here are the last three measures of the third Refrain. Note the quarter-note rest before the concluding cadence.



Here is the Refrain's second appearance.

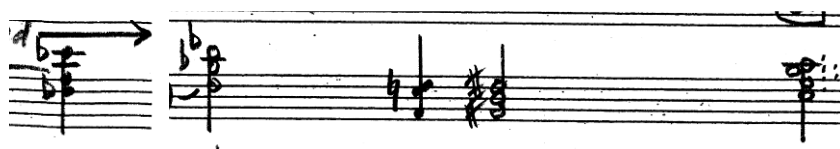


The Refrain contains the germinal substance for the melodic materials used throughout the piece. Notice particularly the:

- Upward and downward resolving seconds in the first and third measure.
- Gently sweeping arc of the melody in the second and fourth measures, which also mostly consists of moving seconds.
- The turn in the fifth measure.

These thematic materials return in a multitudinous array of guises, in inner voices as well as in the top melody line. As you listen to the Sonata be alert to these melodic mini-motifs; they are everywhere.

The Refrain and the chordal sequences also reflect each other. Look at this excerpt, which can be heard at 8'13" into the movement. Notice the arc of the top notes of the chords, and its resemblance to the shape of the melody in measure four of the Refrain.



Or this sonority, which is heard at 24'56", shortly before the Refrain returns a second time, which is reminiscent of the first two notes of the Refrain's opening measure.



Movement II – “Light” (3 arias)

The three arias of “Light” play without pause, each one flowing into the next. They continue the development of the Refrain and chordal sequence material from the previous movement. Each is a set of variations. The number of variations in each Aria is a Fibonacci number, 8, 3 and 2, respectively.

Aria 1 is a set of eight continuous variations on aspects of the Refrain melody. Here is the opening, below. Notice how almost all the voices are moving by the interval of a second. The top voice begins by resolving upward, instead of downward as in the Refrain; later, in measure 10, there is a downward resolution similar to the Refrain. Notice also the characteristic melodic leap of a tritone from measure 4 to measure 5. The first melodic leap at the very opening of Movement I is also a tritone – C to Gb. Finally, note the suspension in the chord at the start of measure 6; this sonority will play an important role in the final movement.



The following table gives information on how far into the track each variation begins in the recording, and a brief description of what to listen for.

Variation	Beginning Time (Minutes`Seconds``)	Key Feature(s) to Listen for
1	0`00``	As shown in figure above. Resolving seconds as per the Refrain.
2	1`25``	The turn from the Refrain is added.
3	2`23``	An inversion of parts of the melody over sparse harmonies.
4	3`07``	A minor key variant with moving sixteenth notes in the left hand. There is a concluding reference to the Refrain at 4`10``.
5	4`22``	Minor key feel continues. Melody is syncopated at the start.
6	5`08``	Harmonic background to the fore. Running sixteenth notes in the left hand. The turn and a fragment of descending melody remain.

7	6`14``	A “new” melody enters derived from measures 5 and 6, but based on 5ths instead of tritones. Variation 4 is briefly quoted, inverted. The new melody returns, each phrase descending by seconds. This new melody will be prominent in the Sonata’s final movement.
8	7`28``	The Refrain melody is referenced, then a cadence on B.

Aria 1 concludes in B major, a tritone away from where it began.

Whereas Aria 1 is an expansion of aspects of the Refrain, Aria 2 combines elements of the Refrain and the chordal sequences from Movement I. Aria 2 begins a half-step up from the end of Aria 1 (as did Refrain 2 in comparison with Refrain 1), with sonorities drawn from the chordal sequences. Aria 2 is in three sections, each a variation, all sharing similar material. Here are the first 11 measures of the first section, which can be heard at 8`29`` into the track on the recording.



Notice the downward resolving second in measure 2 (as in the Refrain). In addition, below is an example of a chord from Movement I that bears similarity to the chord in measures 3 and 4 above.



A little further along, the Refrain makes an appearance (12`40`` into the track on the recording). This concludes the first section.



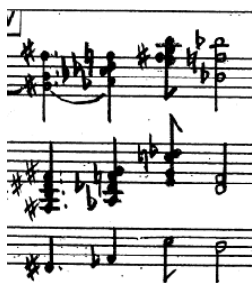
Like section 1, section (variation) 2 starts with a downward moving second, this time in the bass.



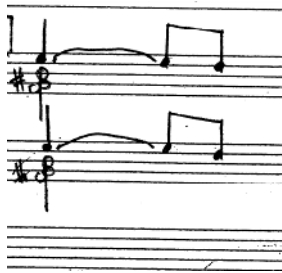
Then begins an elaborate passage (below) that harks back to Movement I, a chain of pairwise descending seconds (13` 19` into the track).



Notice the similarity to this passage from Movement 1, below.



Of course, the downward resolving second is never far away.

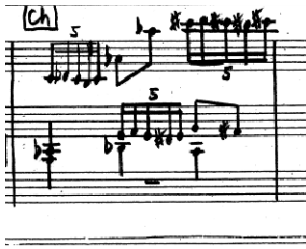


(15`01`` into the track)

Section (variation) 3 also features (at 15`44`` into the track) a downward moving second in the bass and similar figurations to section 2.



The Aria concludes with a canonic passage based on the turn in the Refrain, followed by a cadence of arpeggiated tri-tonic chords. Here is the beginning of the canonic passage (16`39`` into the track).



And here is the cadence.



Aria 3 consists of two variations of a melody derived from the Refrain. The first half of the Aria is a highly contrapuntal setting of the melody. In the Aria's second half, the melody is restated over block chords reminiscent of the chordal sequences in Movement I. This variation, for the first time in the piece, has the Refrain melody and the first movement's chordal sequences running throughout it simultaneously.

10

10

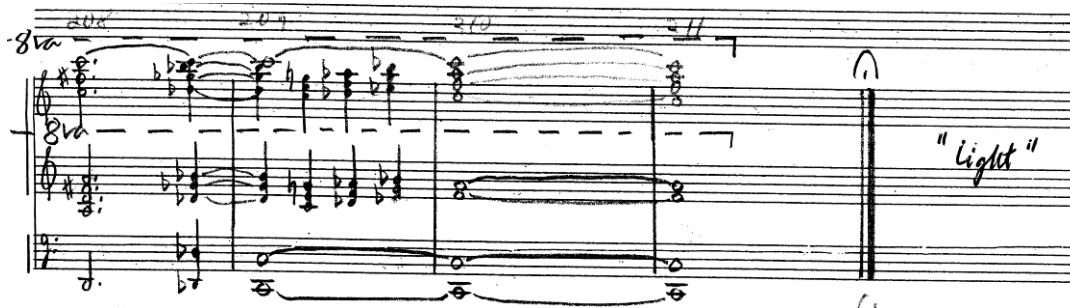
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Aria 3 concludes with an iridescent cadence, in the same key that “Light” began, F major.



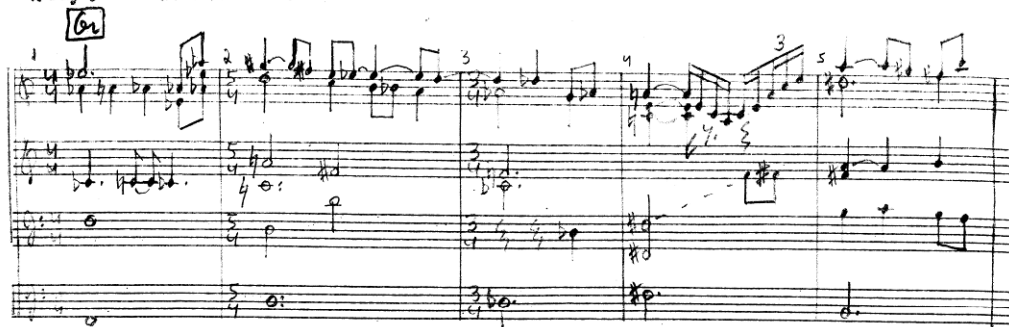
Movement III – “The Days”

“The Days” comprises five distinct sub-movements, and contains the first fast music in the piece. As regards length, the sub-movements take the shape of an inverted arch. Each sub-movement takes less time to play than the last, until the middle (third) sub-movement is reached, which itself is barely over a minute long, and the shortest segment in the Sonata. Then the last two sub-movements each in turn increase in length, mirroring the successive decrease in length of the first two sub-movements. Though the sub-movements are not called etudes, the first four have that character. The fifth sub-movement has the quality of an epilogue, at the approximate midway point of the piece.

Sub-movement 1 is in four sections. The conclusion of each section is marked by a long-held major-sounding chord accompanied by rapid etude-like figuration. The opening section begins with a melody that is deconstructed in subsequent sections. The opening melody bears closest relation to Aria 1.

Here is the opening melody.

Adagio (cantabile). (♩ = 54)



Notice the similarities of measures 1, 2, 3 and 5, respectively, to these measures, below, from Aria 1.



The melody is extended by one measure in section 2 (section 2 begins 1'09" into the track). The overall shape of the melody is retained but, here, the original opening measure is swapped into the fourth measure. Here is the opening of section 2.



In section 3 (3'20" into the track), the melody is elaborately deconstructed and extended by one further additional measure.



The melody in section 4 (4'47'' into the track) is compressed into two measures that capture, without repetition, the moving chromatic lines and the shape of the movement's opening melody.



The movement concludes with a chromatic scale flourish played on the Choir manual using the Harp and Tremolo stops, a striking combination. Chromatic scales will play an important role in the final movement.

Sub-movement 2 is the first music marked in a fast tempo (quarter note equals 100) and is perhaps the most obviously etude-like of the five sub-movements. There are constantly running sixteenth notes, first in the left hand, then in the right hand, then in both hands together. Harmonies change twice per 2/4 measure. Here is how the sub-movement opens.



The harmonies of the first 21 measures are all roving major chords. Starting in measure 22, seconds and sevenths are added to the harmonies. In this sense, the sequence of events in this sub-movement mirrors in a

much more compressed fashion what happens in the chordal sequences in the first movement; that is, as the music progresses the chords become more complex. The roving harmonies never repeat exactly, but rather are constantly shifting permutations of sub-groups of the twelve pitch-classes. Let's look at the first twenty measures to see the permutations at work. There are five groups of four-measure periods. The harmony changes eight times in each period. The following table shows measure numbers, which major chords sound within those measures, and, based on the roots of the major chords, what the pitch-class sets are for each group of chords. It is easier to appreciate the permutations when looking at the pitch-class sets. As you scan the major chords, notice that, as in the chordal sections of the first movement, all twelve pitch classes are utilized.

Measure Numbers	Major Chords (in the order they appear)	Pitch-Class Set – Prime Form (based on chord root)
1-4	Bb, C, B, E, Ab, F, D, G	[0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10]
5-8	E, B, Bb, Eb, Db, A, G, C	[0, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9]
9-12	Eb, Gb, Db, A, Db, D, Bb, F	[0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9]
13-16	Gb, Db, Ab, F, A, F, Eb, D	[0, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8]
17-20	G, E, Eb, Ab, B, A, C, Gb	[0, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9]

Sub-movement 3 is the shortest movement and the simplest, sonically. It consists of hands-together, unison, roving broken chords and scalar passages. The harmonic rhythm starts at the same pace as in sub-movement 2, one change per quarter note, but then, on average, accelerates. In addition, minor chord harmonies are introduced. Seven minor chords appear: C#, C, Bb, F#, D, B and A. This listener experiences this brief movement as a needed “reset” before the increasing complexities of the remainder of the piece. Here is an excerpt.



Sub-movement 4, like Aria 3, is in two co-equal sections. It is bristling with technically difficult writing for the pedal and for both hands. Here are the opening two measures.



Notice the similarities to the following two excerpts. The first example, analogous to measure 1 above, is from the chordal sections of Movement I. The second example, from Aria 2, shows the similarity between the right hand figuration and the pedal part, above.



The second section (beginning 1'59" into the track) is a more intricate recomposition of the sub-movement's opening section. Here are its first two measures. Notice that the chords are more complex than in the opening section; this recalls the tendency in Movement I for chords to become more complex as the movement progresses.



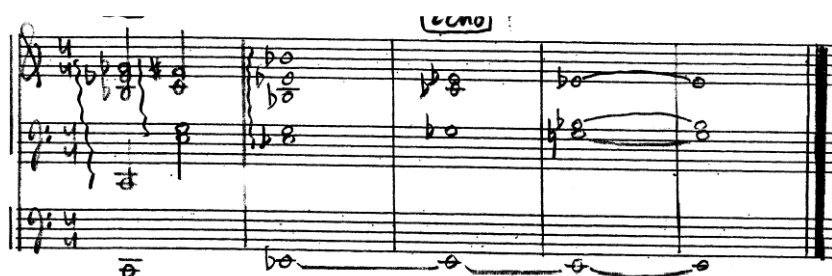
The sub-movement concludes with tremolo triads, tremoloing with their upward neighbor tone (a major second up) over a dissonant pedal. These two chords are the same two chords that began Movement I, but in reverse order (Gb, C). The held pedal is a superposition of the pedal notes of the original two chords.



The last sub-movement is brief, contemplative, but obsessive. Like the chordal sections of Movement I, it is composed entirely of chords that grow more complex as the music develops. Each sequence of chords “cadences” on a chord that consists of the black keys (There is one cadential chord that has a white note, “A”). The ear hears these cadential chords as some version (or inversion) of a Gb with added sixth (Eb). Ten times, the music cadences. The number of measures of each cadential sequence is: 3, 3, 3, 3, 7, 9, 4, 2, 3, and 5. Here is a sample sequence.



The movement then closes with a pristine cadence on Eb major.



Movement IV – “Dance of Joy”

The *Dance of Joy* stands in the middle of the Sonata, forming a bridge between the variegated first three movements and the gargantuan last movement. *Dance of Joy* can be thought of as a chaconne masquerading as a scherzo. Like a scherzo, it is swift and in A-B-A form. But, within each section, there is a continuous stream of variations, like a chaconne. The “A” section is divided into two halves of almost exactly equal length. The first half has 12 variations; the second half has 10 variations. The second half recomposes the material from the first half.

The phrase structure of the variations is asymmetrical. Phrase lengths of the variations are generally unique within the movement; that is, each phrase length, with few exceptions, appears only once.

The second half of Section A begins at 2`53`` into the track. Section B, the Trio, begins at 5`41``. Section A returns at 10`29``, and its second half returns at 13`21``.

By and large, the earmark of the start of a variation is a lead in of three quarter-note (or six eighth-note) chords followed by a longer held set of two chords. Usually, the lead-in chords are played without pedal, or enter over an already sounding pedal note. Here is the opening of the movement.

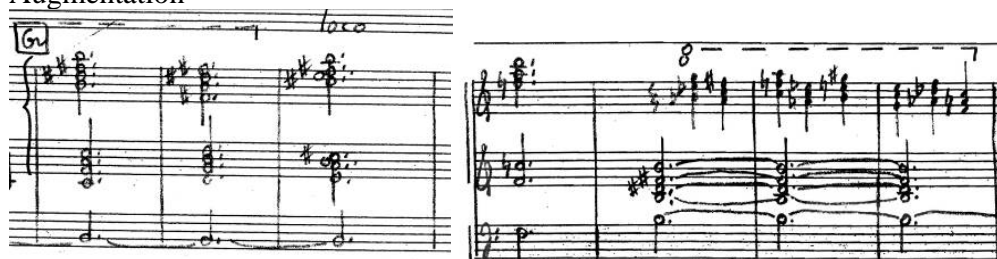


Here is another example.

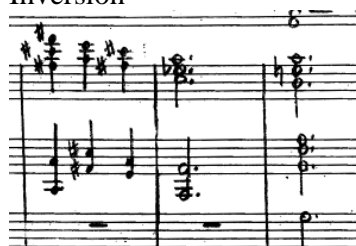


The variations are subject to a wide variety of treatments, including augmentation, inversion and deconstruction. There's even a whiff of Richard Strauss's "Presentation of the Rose," from *Der Rosenkavalier*, in the quarter note triads in the first example, below. Once a particular technique (e.g., inversion) is in play, it is employed repeatedly as part of the permutational process active in the movement. See the following three examples.

Augmentation



Inversion



Deconstruction



Each half of Section A concludes with a 23 measure variation that ends with the following ecstatic passage.

The following table lists the length in measures of each Section A variation along with the each variation's starting measure, plus comments where relevant.

Section	Variation	Length in Measures	Start Measure	Comment
A – first half	1	7	1	
	2	16	8	Phrase expansion technique enters.
	3	15	24	
	4	8	39	
	5	11	47	Inversion technique enters.

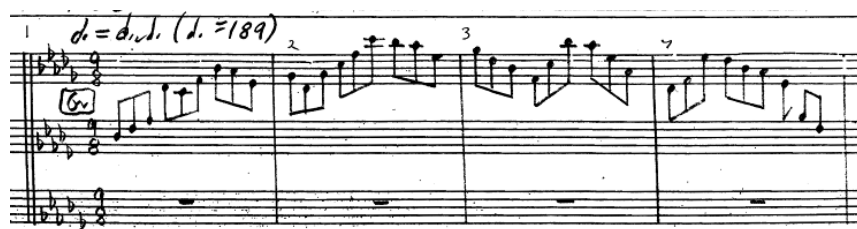
Section	Variation	Length in Measures	Start Measure	Comment
	6	10	58	Augmentation technique enters.
	7	20	68	
	8	8	88	Three leading quarter notes transformed into six eighth-notes.
	9	17	96	
	10	23	113	Deconstruction technique begins after a massive pentatonic chord that ends the previous variation.
	11	15	137	
	12	23	152	Except for first measure, identical to variation 22.
A – second half	13	22	177	Further phrase expansion.
	14	18	198	
	15	8	216	
	16	12	224	
	17	16	236	
	18	7	252	
	19	14	259	
	20	13	273	
	21	38	286	More deconstruction after the same massive pentatonic chord that ends variation 9.
	22	23	324	Except for first measure, identical to variation 12.

The Trio is repeated, and moves like the wind; three notes take the same time as a quarter note in Section A. The Trio is in four sections, three main sections in the keys of Db, D, Eb, and a coda in Bb that ultimately acts as a transition back to the scherzo. The four sections are of almost equal lengths (40, 39, 39 and 37 measures respectively).

The Trio can be viewed as a recomposition as well as a continuation of the Refrain. Like the three iterations of the Refrain, the three main sections of the Trio are each a semitone higher than the previous one. In addition, the keys of the Trio continue the keys of the Refrain (Bb, B and C) up the chromatic scale forming a hexachord of the semitones from Bb through Eb, inclusive. The coda of the Trio, in Bb, takes us full circle back to the Bb of the opening statement of the Refrain.

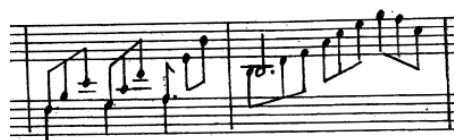
Embedded in the passagework of the Trio are the upward and downward resolving seconds heard much more slowly in the Refrain. Due to the drastic difference in tempo, what is perceived as having great emotional weight in the Refrain has a diaphanous lightness in the Trio.

Here is an example, the Trio's first four measures.



Observe the Db to C and the Bb to Ab in measure 1, the Gb to Ab and the C to Bb to Ab in measure 2, the Bb to Ab in measure 3, and, the Eb to Db and Bb to Ab in measure 4.

In the Trio's Bb coda (section four), anticipations emerge of the Dance, the short-short-short-long tetrameter with which the Dance begins.



Movement V – “Thanksgiving”

As long as a Bruckner symphony, “Thanksgiving” is the grand summation of the Organ Sonata. The movement encompasses and transfigures the material heard previously, weaving it into a lush contrapuntal tapestry of endless, and gorgeous, melody. The musical line truly does not pause throughout the movement's 85 minute duration, until the final cadential sequence arrives on G.

Movement 5, like Movement 1, gathers momentum by a gradual quickening of note values as well as by an increase in the density of chromatic material, though over a much longer span than in Movement 1. See in the table below measures 152, 302, 333, 429, 803, and 881 for the six episodes in Movement V that employ chromatic scales and chromatically moving chords as linchpin structural points supporting the movement's large-scale form.

As important, Movement 5 makes extensive use of the downward and upward resolving seconds that play so important a role in the Refrain. Even though the Sonata is not functionally tonal, the way the resolving seconds are employed in Movement 5 (and, indeed, also in the Refrain), creates an ambiguous feeling on the part of the listener. One reacts immediate term to the resolving seconds as if they were part of a larger context of traditional functional harmony, yet, on first hearing, those expectations are thwarted by the “non-tonal” way the harmonies roam as they go about their many permutations. On subsequent hearings, the ear adjusts to

these new surroundings, the roving harmonies seem perfectly natural, organic even, and they possess a logic and a beauty all their own. By its nature, this style of harmonic and melodic permutation developed by Mr. Violette lends itself well to the large scale forms he is pioneering.

In other ways, Movement 1 and Movement 5 are very different. For instance, in Movement 1, melody is subservient to chordal textures, while in Movement 5 the fine contrapuntal line is paramount. Another difference is that Movement 5 builds tension by increasing the number of musical references per unit time. As the end nears, more and more, the references blend into each other, which serves not only to build tension, but also, the listener, by remembering, to bring the entire Sonata into clearer focus. Finally, key features of the main theme remain unchanged (more on this below) amidst the movement's constant permutations. Hence, each time the main theme returns, it carries with it a greater emotional intensity; it is as if one is seeing an old friend after a long journey.

The music in Movement 5 is multi-referential; that is, while its music refers back to material earlier utilized, that very material may already have resulted from transformation of still earlier material. Thus, some of the examples below will reference multiple earlier points in the piece.

One further note, regarding references to time in the example below: since Movement 5 spans 2 CDs – the first 12 minutes is on track 8 of CD 2 and the remaining 73 minutes take up CD 3 – timings for musical examples will refer to the time within the particular CD track.

Movement 5 opens with an apparently new main theme. Here are the opening 19 measures.

35

Molto Sostenuto Sempre (♩=40) V

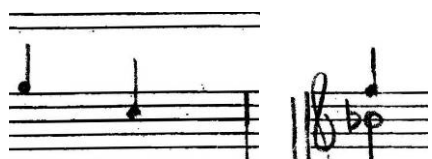
The head of the main theme is presented in measures 1 and 2, the tail in measures 4 and 5. The theme begins to undergo transformation immediately and is restated in measures 5 through 10, and in measures 11 through 14. The head is presented alone in measures 15 and 16, and in measures 17 and 18. While the head and the tail are continuously varied, the head's downward resolving second is always left intact, thus functioning as an important signpost throughout the movement.

Let's focus for a bit on the provenance of the main theme, how it is built from recombinations of previous material. It will be seen that the main theme is modified from material heard in Movement I; Aria 1, Aria 2 and Aria 3 in Movement II; and sub-movement 1 from Movement III.

Measures 1 and 2 of the main theme can be traced to this theme, below, from Aria 1. It is of interest to note that this Aria 1 theme is found nowhere else in the Sonata before now.



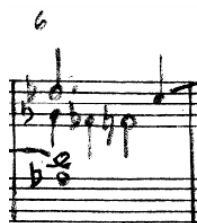
Notice that, if note values are doubled, the rhythm is the same as the rhythm of the head of the main theme, counting the resolving suspension as the last beat. Notice also the dropping interval of a fifth in both. Now, let's shift the frame one beat to the right in Aria 1. Now we have a descending fifth and a rising fourth, which matches exactly the intervallic content of the last half of measure 1 and measure 2 of the main theme.



Where might the suspension in measure 2 of the main theme originate? In Aria 2, we see the same suspension in the right hand chord in measure 9.




And Aria 1, also, has a similar suspension in measure 6 (the D in the tenor voice is actually a Db tied from the previous measure).



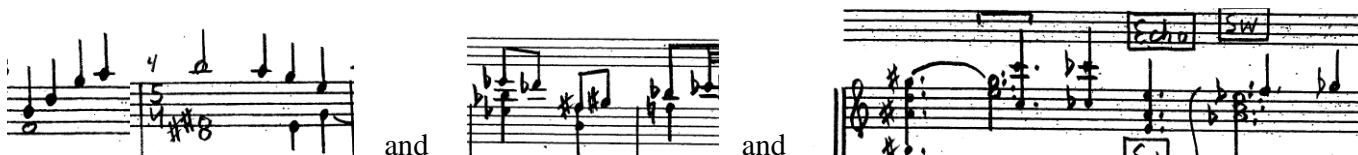
Measure 3 of the main theme's melody - - is derived from the very next measures (measures 10 and 11) in Aria 2. Notice how the melodic contours are the same.



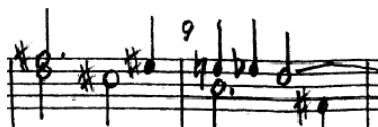
The main theme melody in measure 4 -  - is inherited from Aria 3 (measure 202, Movement II is used here; there are other comparable instances in Aria 3 from which to choose). Notice again how the melodic contours are the same.



Notice, too, the similarity between the parabolic arc of the main theme melody in measures 3 and 4, and, respectively, the reverse arc of these excerpts from the Refrain (Movement I) and the chordal section of Movement I, following to the right.



As a final example let's examine the lineage of the descending chromatic line in measures 8 and 9 of the main theme. Here is the line.

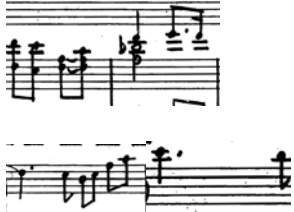









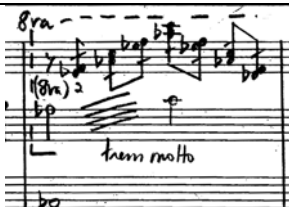








Traveling back through the Sonata, note the precursors to this passage from, respectively, Movement III (measure 2), Movement II, Aria 1 (measures 20 and 21), and Movement I (shortly before the second Refrain).









The following table takes us through Movement 5, starting at 8 minutes into it. The first 8 minutes (82 measures) are occupied by the main theme and its variants. All references to the Refrain are to Movement I. All references to Arias are to Movement II. Please note also that the Movement 5 examples do not always coincide with the start time, but for clarity may be taken instead from subsequent measures.

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
83	2/8	7`57``	Aria 3		
105		10`16``	Aria 3		
120	3/1	0`09``	Aria 3		
126		0`44``	Aria 1 (passing reference)		
138		1`59``	Main theme		
152		3`24``	Aria 1 Aria 3		

Start Measure	CD/ Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
161		4`16``	Refrain Aria 3		
179		5`26``	Refrain Movement III, sub- movement 1		
210		7`40``	Refrain Aria 3		
225		9`00``	Refrain Aria 3		
237		10`01``	Refrain		
241		10`23``	Refrain (deconstruc ted)		

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
272		13`10``	Refrain (left hand)		
293		15`12``	Aria 3		
302		16`04``	Aria 1 Aria 3		
318		17`34``	Refrain (minor key)		
333		19`04``	Aria 1 Aria 3		
349		20`52``	Aria 1 Main theme		

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
361		22`04``	Refrain		
391		24`53``	Movement III, sub-movement 1		
393		25`09``	Aria 1		
429		27`47``	Aria 1 Aria 3		
451		29`46``	Movement III, sub-movement 4		




Start Measure	CD/ Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
452		29`52``	Aria 1 Refrain Aria 2		
512		35`08``	Dance of Joy (retrograde) Refrain Aria 1 Aria 2 Main theme (All deconstructed)		
554		38`31``	Refrain (embellished)		
599		41`44``	Main theme (Deconstructed – with detailed references to all the Sonata movements)		
641		45`10``	Refrain Movement III, sub-movement 1		


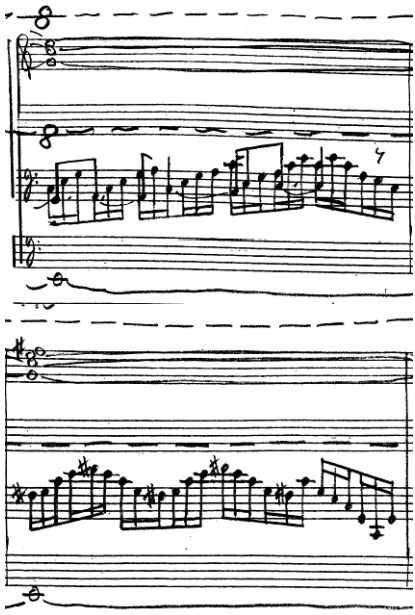
Start Measure	CD/ Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
672		47'31''	Refrain Aria 3		
746		54'24''	Main theme Aria 3 Refrain Aria 1 Aria 2		

Start Measure	CD/ Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
786		58`05``	Aria 1		
791		58`25``	Main theme Refrain Aria 1 Aria 2		
803		59`33``	Aria 1 Aria 3 Cadence at measure 820		
822		61`18``	Main theme		

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
836		62'39"	Aria 1 Aria 3 Refrain		
881		66'31"	Aria 1 Aria 3 Movement III, sub-movement 4		

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
897		67'55''	Refrain Aria 3		
907		68'41''	Aria 1 Aria 2 Aria 3		
912		69'05''	Refrain		

Start Measure	CD/Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
919		69`46``	Main theme		
927		70`21``	Aria 3		
929		70`44``	Movement I opening (chords moving by tritones also form the Movement 5 coda)		

Start Measure	CD/ Track	Start Time	Prior Reference	Prior Reference Example	Movement 5 Example
			Refrain (last reference)		

The Registration

Each organ is unique, the product of its materials, its voicing, its scaling, the ambient temperature and humidity, and the acoustic properties of the space where it is installed. No two stops, even identical stops designed to produce identical notes and timbres will sound the same on two different organs. Determining the registration, that is, choosing and combining the stops of a pipe organ in order to produce a particular sound, requires both technique and art – technique because the performer must know enough about acoustics to choose intelligently from an almost uncountable number of combinations based on known properties of sound, and art because the performer must leaven those choices to, in his or her estimation, frame the piece in the absolute best light. Thus, when registering a new piece on a new organ, a player must be prepared to start from scratch, regardless of what indications may have been left by the composer. Nevertheless, composer-indicated registrations should never be ignored, but rather should be a starting point for any further considerations. We are fortunate that Mr. Violette has left detailed registrations for the Organ Sonata. These registrations are rooted in a composer's familiarity with the piece's structure, its dramatic inflection points, and generally, an insider's knowledge of how to enhance and project the beauty inherent in the piece.

The Opus 700 pipe organ, and the acoustic space at the First Baptist Church within which it is installed, produce an exceptionally clear texture and pure sound. Mr. Violette has capitalized on these qualities and registered the Sonata to maximize clarity while still not sacrificing power when needed. These registrations emphasize fundamental tones and in large part utilize the organ's flue pipes, including consistent use of the characteristic "organ" sounding diapasons, which do not attempt to resemble any instrument other than the organ.

See below for the full array of stops associated with each manual and the pedalboard of this instrument.

The Instrument

Called by Virgil Fox the "Stradivarius of organs," the Opus 700 pipe organ was built J. W. Steere & Son (Springfield, Massachusetts) in 1918 and lovingly restored by Keith Bigger in 1993. It is installed at The Baptist Temple (originally First Baptist Church of Brooklyn) on 360 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, New York City. The organ was one of only two four-manual instruments by J. W. Steere & Son still intact in its original installment. Unfortunately, on July 7, 2010, a three-alarm fire, which broke out in the organ's swell division, seriously damaged the instrument. Mr. Violette's recording of his Organ Sonata was the last on the organ before the fire.

The Organ Historical Society awarded the Opus 700 its distinguished Historical Citation No. 137 in recognition of this J. W. Steere & Son Organ as an outstanding example of organ-building and worthy of preservation. The organ has been featured on Organ Historical Society recordings. It also has been featured in the accompaniment of silent films in programs produced by the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

The Opus 700 has an electro-pneumatic action, and has 4 manuals, 49 stops, 38 ranks, and 2,553 pipes. The A above middle C is pitched at 435 cycles per second (at 68°F). The manuals have 61 keys and a compass from CC to c4. The 32 pedals have a compass of CCC to g1.

More specifically:

Great Organ (Manual II) – 61 notes, enclosed with Choir (10" wind pressure)

16	Bourdon *	PED	4	Octave	61
8	First Diapason *	61	4	Harmonic Flute	61
8	Second Diapason *	61	8	Tuba	61
8	Gemshorn	61		Chimes	EC
8	Great Flute	61			
8	Gedeckt	61		* 6" wind, unenclosed with Pedal	

Swell Organ (Manual III) – 61 notes, enclosed (6" wind pressure)

16	Bourdon	73	4	Flute Traverso (harmonic)	73
8	Diapason	73	2	Flautino	61
8	Salicional	73	16	Posaune	73
8	Aeoline	73	8	Cornopean (harmonic)	73
8	Vox Angelica [TC]	61	8	Oboe	73
8	Viole d'Orchestre	73	8	Vox Humana	61
8	Vox Celeste	73		Tremolo	
8	Gedackt	73			

Choir Organ (Manual I) – 61 notes, enclosed (6" wind pressure)

16	Gamba	73	4	Flute d'Amour	73
8	Diapason	73	8	Clarinet	61
8	Dulciana	73	8	Orchestral Oboe	61
8	Concert Flute	73		Harp [TC] (Mayland)	49 bars
8	Flute Celeste [TC]	61		Tremolo	
8	Quintadena	73			

Echo Organ (Manual IV) – 61 notes, enclosed (10" wind pressure)

8	Stentorphone	73	8	Vox Humana	61
8	Muted Viole	73		Tremolo	
8	Viole Celeste	73		Chimes (Deagan)	20 tubes
8	Fern Flute	73			

Pedal Organ – 32 notes

32	Resultant	—	16	Posaune	SW
16	Diapason	44	8	Flute [Bourdon]	—
16	Bourdon	61	8	Octave [Diapason]	—
16	Gedeckt	SW	8	Violoncello	CH
16	Gamba	CH			

Couplers

Great to Pedal 8'	Swell to Choir 16', 4', 4'
Swell to Pedal 8', 4'	Echo to Choir 8'
Choir to Pedal 8'	Great to Great 4'
Echo to Pedal 8'	Swell to Swell 16', Unison Off, 4'
Swell to Great 16', 8', 4'	Choir to Choir 16', Unison Off, 4'
Choir to Great 16', 8', 4'	Echo to Echo 16', Unison Off, 4'
Echo to Great 16', 8', 4'	